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INFO RUCNFUR/DARFUR COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE
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SIPDIS

SENSITIVE
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DEPARTMENT FOR AF A/S FRAZER, AF S/E NATSIOS AND AF/SPG
NSC FOR PITTMAN AND SHORTLEY

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: PGOV KPKO AU ASEC SU UN

SUBJECT: DARFUR: VIOLENCE INTENSIFIES IN EL FASHER

¶11. (SBU) Violence in El Fasher has intensified over the last 48 hours as 1,000 Janjaweed have entered the city, attacked the market, and clashed with forces aligned with the Sudan Liberation Movement (SLM)/Minawi. According to Minawi, four of his men were seriously injured, though SLM contacts in El Fasher later indicated one fatality. Embassy staff reported from El Fasher that SLM forces and 20 gun ships have grouped south of the city and that 100 Janjaweed vehicles were in the town. The United Nations (UN) has evacuated 80 non-essential staff, leaving 93 in place; Swedish Relief Services has also pulled its staff from the area. According to the Canadian Embassy, the African Union Mission to Sudan (AMIS) has withdrawn those personnel "living some distance" from AMIS headquarters to its main El Fasher compound and to the area around the Zam Zam internally displaced persons (IDP) camp. The same sources said that AMIS will "aggressively patrol" both locations. AMIS and Pacific Architects and Engineers (PAE) have canceled all flights from El Fasher for December 6.

¶12. (SBU) Senior Assistant to the President and SLM leader Minni Minawi told Embassy staff that his forces intervened against the Janjaweed in the face of Sudanese Armed Forces' (SAF) in action. In a December 4 press conference, Minawi called on the international community, the African Union (AU), and the Sudanese government to protect civilians. "All options are possible, including going back to war--which is against our wish--if the Sudanese government does not stop the activities of the Janjaweed in Darfur," he said at the press conference. "We tolerated the Government's intentional violations of the DPA during the last six months with the vain hope of solving the problems. We can't tolerate this anymore." Minawi told UK Embassy staff on December 5 that both President Bashir and Vice President Ali Osman Taha have refused to discuss the developments in El Fasher with him. Department of Defense personnel reported that North Darfur governor Yousef Kibir has been meeting with Arab tribal leaders and government officials throughout the day in response to Minawi's "ultimatum," though there is no indication that the Arab militias have stood down.

¶13. (SBU) Skylink, the contract aviation services firm, reported that four out of six of its fuel trucks in El Fasher have been taken by the "Sudanese government." In response, Skylink has ensured that all its aircraft are loaded with adequate fuel to relocate to Nyala. This will also safeguard fuel stocks for the resumption of the regular flight schedule.

¶14. (SBU) Security issues pertaining to Embassy staff in Darfur and the related EAC meeting will be reported septel.
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